

REMARKS

In response to the May 18, 2007 Final Office Action and the July 23, 2007 Advisory Action, independent claims 1, 14 and 23 are amended herein. Claims 6, 7 and 10 were previously cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added by way of these claim amendments. Applicant requests the Patent Office to not enter the previously unentered after final amendments submitted as part of Applicant's Response to Final Office Action electronically filed July 12, 2007. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 8, 9, 13-17, and 19-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by European Patent No. 1,083,599 filed by Georg Fromme et al. ("Fromme"). Applicant respectfully traverses and submits Fromme does not teach all of the elements of the claimed embodiment of the invention.

Notably, Fromme does not disclose a connecting element that rests on the side faces of two adjacent substrates as recited by the amended independent claims. Instead, Fromme's connecting element rests on a top surface, and thus provides a different function than that of the connecting elements as defined in the claims which is to prevent a deformation of one substrate region to continue to an adjacent substrate region.

With regard to independent claim 23, the Examiner alleges that element 20 in Fromme is both a connecting region and substrate within the meaning of Applicant's invention. Applicant respectfully disagrees. Fromme explicitly defines element 20 as a substrate. Moreover, the Examiner does not equate Fromme's element 20 to the connecting region recited in any of the claims except for claim 23, where the Examiner equates element 20 to both a substrate and a connecting region. Furthermore, element 20 in Fromme has no design features that would

prevent a deformation of one substrate region to continue to an adjacent substrate region as recited in claim 23.

Thus, independent claims 1, 14, and 23 are not anticipated by Fromme because Fromme fails to disclose each and every element as set forth in the claims in as complete detail as is contained in the claims. Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claims 2-5, 8, 9, 11-13, and 15-22 are allowable at least to the extent of the independent claim to which they refer, respectively. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-3, 8, 9, 13-17, and 19-23.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 4, 5, 11, and 18 were rejected under 35 U. S. C. §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Fromme as applied to Claims 1, 2, and 14 above, and further in view of Japanese Publication JP 2001 118987 filed by Naruse Mikio ("Mikio"). Applicant respectfully traverses and submits the cited art combinations, even if proper, which Applicant does not concede, do not render the claimed embodiment of the invention obvious.

Applicant respectfully submits that dependent Claims 4, 5, 11, and 18 are allowable at least to the extent of the independent claims to which they refer, respectively. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claims 4, 5, 11, and 18. Applicant reserves the right to make further arguments regarding the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), if necessary, and do not concede that the Examiner's proposed combinations are proper.

Conclusion

Applicant has made an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance in light of the amendments and remarks set forth above. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims.

If there are any matters concerning this Application that may be cleared up in a telephone conversation, please contact Applicant's attorney, Mark R. Bilak at 919.854.1844.

Respectfully submitted,

COATS & BENNETT, P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark R. Bilak". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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